



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Agency Information Collection Activities: Comment Request; Grantee

Reporting Requirements for NSF NRT Program

AGENCY: National Science Foundation.

ACTION: Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request.

SUMMARY: The National Science Foundation (NSF) has submitted the following information collection requirement to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. This is the second notice for public comment; the first was published in the FEDERAL REGISTER and no comments were received. NSF is forwarding the proposed new submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance simultaneously with the publication of this second notice.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to

www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain. Find this particular information collection by selecting "Currently under 30-day Review – Open for Public Comments" or by using the search function.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Suzanne H. Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation, 2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22314, or send email to splimpto@nsf.gov.

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339, which is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year (including federal holidays).

Comments regarding this information collection are best assured of having their

full effect if received within 30 days of this notification. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling 703-292-7556.

NSF may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number, and the agency informs potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information that such persons are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title of Collection: NSF Research Traineeship (NRT) Monitoring Program.

OMB Number: 3145-NEW.

Type of Request: Intent to seek approval to establish an information collection.

Abstract:

The National Science Foundation's (NSF's) Division of Graduate Education (DGE) in the Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR) administers the NSF Research Traineeship (NRT) program. The NRT program is designed to encourage the development and implementation of bold, new, and potentially transformative models for STEM graduate education training. The NRT program seeks to ensure that graduate students in research-based master's and doctoral degree programs develop the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed to pursue a range of STEM careers. NRT is dedicated to effective training of STEM graduate students in high priority interdisciplinary or convergent research areas, through the use of a comprehensive traineeship model that is innovative, evidence-based, and aligned with changing workforce and research needs.

Currently NRT awardees provide NSF with information on their activities through periodic research performance progress reports. The NRT program will now replace these reports with a tailored program monitoring system that will use internet-based information and communication technologies to collect, review, and validate specific data on NRT awards. EHR is committed to ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness with which respondents provide and NSF staff can access and analyze data on funded projects within the NRT program.

The NRT monitoring system will include subsets of questions aimed at the different project participants (i.e., Principal Investigators (PIs) and trainees), and will allow for data analysis and data report generation by authorized NSF staff. The collections will generally include three categories of descriptive data: (1) Staff and project participants (data that are necessary to determine individual-level treatment and control groups for future third-party study or for internal evaluation); (2) project implementation characteristics (also necessary for future use to identify well-matched comparison groups); and (3) project outputs (necessary to measure baseline for pre- and post- NSF-funding-level impacts). NRT awardees will be required to report data on an annual basis for the life of their award.

Use of the Information: NSF will primarily use the data from this collection for program planning, management, and audit purposes to respond to queries from the Congress, the public, NSF's external merit reviewers who serve as advisors, including Committees of Visitors (COVs), the NSF's Office of the Inspector General, and as a basis for either internal or third-party evaluations of individual programs. This information is required for effective administration, communication, program and project monitoring and evaluation, and for measuring attainment of NSF's program, project, and strategic goals, and as

identified by the President's Accountability in Government Initiative; GPRA, and the NSF's Strategic Plan. The Foundation's FY 2018-2022 Strategic Plan may be found at: https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf18045.

Since this collection will primarily be used for accountability and evaluation purposes, including responding to queries from COVs and other scientific experts, a census rather than a sampling design typically is necessary. At the individual project level, funding can be adjusted based on individual project's responses to some of the surveys. Some data collected under this collection will serve as baseline data for separate research and evaluation studies.

NSF-funded contract or grantee researchers and internal or external evaluators in part may identify control, comparison, or treatment groups for NSF's education and training portfolio using some of the descriptive data gathered through this collection to conduct well-designed and rigorous research and portfolio evaluation studies.

Use of the Information: The information collected is primarily for the purposes of program monitoring and accountability purposes. The information may also be used to respond to queries from Congress, NSF's external merit reviewers, and as the basis for program evaluations.

Respondents: NRT PIs, coPIs, Faculty, and Trainees.

Estimated number of respondents: 2,346.

Average Burden per Reporting: The average hours per year works out to 4,207.5 hours. This reflects a range of 10-15 minutes for the PI/coPI/Faculty surveys, 1.5 hours for the trainee survey, and 24 hours for the project survey.

Frequency: Once annually

Comments: Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Dated: September 27, 2021.

Suzanne H. Plimpton,

Reports Clearance Officer,

National Science Foundation.

[FR Doc. 2021-21326 Filed: 9/29/2021 8:45 am; Publication Date: 9/30/2021]